process and is not due to any unsafe condition in the plant. Based on this, the plant is expected to be authorised for further continued operation beyond May. 2002.

Village Telephones by Telecom Companies

764. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that telecom companies failed to fulfil their existing targets of providing village telephones, as per the National Telecom Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for not fulfilling the targets; and

(d) the action proposed by Government against these companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The six private sector licensees of Basic Telephone Service have not been able to fulfill their voluntarily committed performance obligations in respect of provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs). The commitments made vis-a-vis performance shown by them for provision of VPTs is enclosed as statement (See below).

(c) The private Basic Telephone Service Operators have apparently so far been focusing their efforts on providing service mainly in urban areas and performance/roll out of service in rural areas has been insignificant.

(d) Government has recovered Liquidated Damage (LD) charges for their delay in performance and made it clear that their committed performance obligations cannot be diluted in any case. Government has asked them to complete the unfulfilled committed roll out obligations by December 2002 against submission of Additional Performance Bank Guarantees and Deed of Guarantees. Further, Government has already taken appropriate steps to resolve their problems.

Statement

Provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) by Private Licensees

Sl. No.	Licensee and Licensed Circle	Effective. Date of License.	Committed targets* for VPTs in first Three years (as per obligations under Licence Agreement)			Total No. committed VPTs in 1st 3 years	No. of VPTs actually provided (28.2.02)
			I Year	IIYear	IIIYear		
1.	M/s Tata (Andhra Pradesh)	30.9.1997	9635 (by	(all villages were to be in first year i.e. by		9635	63
2.	M/s Reliance Telecom (Gujarat)		8635 (by	(all villages were to be in first year i.e. by		8635	NU
3.	M/s HFCL Infotel Ltd. (Punjab)	30.9.1997	5442 (by	(all villages were to be in first year i.e. by		5442	Nil
4.	M/s Hughes Telecom (India) Limited. (Maharashtra)	30.9.1997	4000 (by	21760 (by 30.9.99)	No village was to be left uncovered 30.9.99	25760	150
5.	M/s Bharti (Madhya	30.9.1997	5500 (by	5500 (by 30.9.99)	5500 (by 30.9.2000)	16500	348
6.	M/s Shyam (Rajasthan)	04.3.199	7439 (by 4.3.1999)	10629 (by 4.3.2000)	13766 (by 4.3.2001)	31834 [36727]**	209
	TOTAL		40651	37889	19266	97806	770

*Translated into absolute terms based on bid/tender documents keeping in view the committed targets for Direct Exchange Lines (DELs) and the figure for number of uncovered villages indicated in the tender.

**The total number of uncovered villages in Rajasthan Service area is only 31834 as against the licensee's commitment of 36727.

[A]As reported by the licensees.